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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
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Agenda item 2 (b) of plenary

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION
44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTIONS: RELEVANT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER
BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

Letter dated 6 March 1992 from the Permanent Representative of
France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General
of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

As you are aware, the Ministers of Environment and Development
Cooperation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
(OECD) met in Paris on 2 and 3 December 1991 and adopted some important
conclusions regarding policy.

Inasmuch as the final document of the Paris meeting (see annex*) has a
direct bearing on the work of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee
for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, I feel that
it would be helpful and appropriate if you were to communicate the text to the
participating delegations.

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE

* The annex is circulated in the languages of submission only.



ANNEX

Policy statement of the Meeting of OECD Ministers
on environment and development, held in Paris on
2 and 3 December 1991

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Policy Statement

1. OECD Ministers of Environment and Development Co-operation, Heads of agencies, and a Commissioner of the European Community* met at the OECD in Paris, 2-3 December, to consider a co-operative new approach to achieving sustainable development on the national, regional and global levels. They were joined during the morning session of the first day by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Heads of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme as well as a Vice-President of the World Bank. The meeting was chaired by Ms Edwige Avice, Minister of Co-operation and Development and Mr. Brice Lalonde, Minister of Environment, France. Vice-Chairmen were Mme. Pauline Browes, Minister of State for Environment, Canada; Mr. Toimi Kankaanniemi, Minister of Development Co-operation, and Ms. Sirpa Pietikainen, Minister of Environment, Finland; and Mr. Carlos Alberto Diogo Soares Borrego, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and Mr. Jose Manuel Durão Barroso, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Portugal. Ministers came to the following conclusions:

Sustainable Development as a Shared and Common Objective

2. The meeting was convened in recognition of the fact that contributing to sustainable development world-wide is one of the OECD's central objectives. Over the past two decades, OECD Members and other countries have made major investments in the concurrent pursuit of economic growth, higher living standards and a healthy environment. Yet, the quality of the human condition in large parts of the world and hopes for a better future continue to be diminished by the interactions of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, unemployment, increased population pressures, uncontrolled urbanisation, pollution of the air, freshwater, seas and oceans, wasteful use of energy and natural resources, and degradation of arable land. This vicious circle must be broken through sound national economic and social policies, supported by international development co-operation. Furthermore, the growing recognition of regional and global scale environmental problems, such as ozone layer depletion and climate change, deforestation and desertification, loss of biological diversity, degradation of water resources and acid rain, calls for collective action by all nations to protect the basic life support systems of the Earth.

* All subsequent references to "Ministers" also include Heads of Agencies and Commissioner of the European Community. All subsequent references to OECD Member countries, OECD governments, etc., include the European Community.

An Interdependent World Economy

3. During recent years an interdependent world economy has emerged, based increasingly on democratic political regimes and on free and open markets. This trend provides new hope and opportunities for the successful pursuit of sustainable development objectives in the 1990s and beyond. It is clear, however, that while the market economy has shown the necessary power and dynamism to promote efficiency and flexibility, market forces, if left to themselves, would not necessarily address the urgent need to combat widespread poverty and environmental problems. Government action is also needed.

A Strengthened Partnership

4. Ministers of the OECD countries, recognising the interdependence of all nations, therefore commit their Governments to use the unique opportunity of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 as a catalyst to build a strengthened partnership for sustainable development with non-Member countries, particularly in the developing world. This partnership should be based on mutual commitments by all countries in the light of their relative capacities and responsibilities.

Responsibilities of OECD Countries

5. Ministers acknowledge the responsibility that OECD countries bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command. In this regard, Ministers encourage the use of national environmental strategies to set priorities, to review policies and to monitor progress towards sustainable development. They emphasize that management of the environment requires the efficient and cost-effective integration and coherence of economic, social and environmental policies in all aspects of national and international policy-making, such as in industry, energy, transport, forestry and agriculture.
6. Ministers fully recognise in particular that OECD countries must demonstrate international leadership and continued commitment to achieve more efficient use of energy and raw materials and to work towards the elimination of human and environmental exposures to highly toxic and persistent chemicals as well as a reduction in the release of waste products into the environment. In this context, Ministers commit themselves to substantial action on the enhancement and protection of greenhouse gas sinks and limitation of emissions of greenhouse gases aiming in particular, as a first step at a stabilisation, individually or collectively, of CO₂ emissions and a phasing-out as soon as possible of CFCs controlled by the Montreal Protocol. Ministers further take note that most OECD countries have committed themselves to stabilise CO₂ emissions, individually or collectively, in general by the year 2000 at 1990 levels, taking into account the differences in their starting points and approaches, and that those countries make a strong appeal to

other OECD countries to do the same. Ministers agree to consider further steps towards an early phase-out of substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol at the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties to that Protocol in Copenhagen. Ministers request the OECD to initiate work on mechanisms to facilitate joint implementation, in a cost-effective manner, of commitments on greenhouse gases.

7. Achieving sustainable development will require a re-evaluation of patterns of both consumption and production. It will also require the development of policies necessary for the promotion of sustainable development. This will include the increased use of economic instruments and the setting of technical standards, for instance for energy efficiency and recycling. It will also require the systematic use of environmental impact assessments and public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, continued technological innovation and diffusion will be needed. Ministers in this context emphasize the major role of economic instruments in stimulating policy integration in a cost-saving manner.
8. Progress and performance of individual OECD countries in meeting domestic environmental policy objectives and international commitments will be monitored in part through the peer review processes of environmental policies within the OECD launched by Environmental Ministers in January 1991 as well as in the ongoing peer review process of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Development Assistance Committee.

Responsibilities of Non-OECD-countries

9. Non-OECD countries are urged to join OECD countries in their commitment to sustainable development. This would include good governance, the effective integration of economic, social and environmental policies, and participatory approaches which involve accountability and broad-based involvement in the formulation and implementation of government policies. This would also involve making full use of the potential of market-based economic policies as well as an efficient private sector for the increased mobilisation of domestic resources. While acknowledging the complex relationship among the environmentally damaging use of natural resources, population growth and development, they note the growing global consensus on the need to slow population growth in those many countries where it is too high to permit sustainable development. Ministers strongly support the action taken by many countries aimed at mastering population growth. Recognising that only with economic and social development will more sustainable growth rates be attained, they stand ready to support measures to improve women's economic and social conditions in developing countries and to help establish, fund and implement effective population strategies and programmes.

Partners in Cooperation: Resources

10. For developing countries to achieve sustainable development and be in a position to address pressing problems of economic growth needed to combat poverty and to improve environmental management domestically, they must have access to the financial resources necessary to meet these challenges. While domestic resources will have to provide a major part, Ministers pledge their support to ensure that external resources available from both the public and private sectors and provided through existing bilateral and multilateral channels should be increased and used effectively and efficiently. In this context, Ministers recognise the importance of equitable burden sharing.
11. For developing countries to play their full part in coping with global environment problems, Ministers consider that appropriate additional financial resources must be made available to them as part of a strengthened partnership. In this respect, Ministers welcome the use of innovative financial mechanisms, such as debt-for-environment swaps. The commitment of OECD countries to finding the means to support world-wide co-operation in protecting the environment is manifested by the recent creation of a special fund under the Montreal Protocol and the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Ministers underline that a modified GEF under appropriate governance should play a leading role as the multilateral mechanism to provide additional financial resources to developing countries in the resolution of environmental problems of global significance. In this regard, most OECD countries will provide new financial resources.

Technology

12. Technological innovation and diffusion will be critical determinants of the pace and character of future economic growth and environmental management. All countries should create propitious conditions to encourage the private sector to innovate, market and use the technologies that contribute to sustainable development. Ministers note the important contribution that the private sector can make toward technology innovation, co-operation, the transfer of "clean" technology and environmental management information. Ministers thus commit their governments to expand technology co-operation with non-Member countries, to provide technology assistance and to address barriers to technology transfer, with a view to improving their access to environmentally-sound technologies, to facilitate the transfer of such technologies to developing countries and to enhance their scientific, technological and administrative capacities to use and develop technologies, by:
 - assisting the development of appropriate incentive structures, policies, legislation and institutions;
 - providing information on technology availability and options;

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- using technical assistance programmes and facilities to assist in building institutional capacities, providing experts, management know-how and training, supporting local research and development efforts, facilitating the acquisition of patents and licences in particular, within the framework of development co-operation, while taking full account of the need to protect intellectual property rights, and stimulating investments and the transfer of technology more generally;
 - addressing barriers to technology transfer and adopting appropriate general measures to reduce such barriers in order to create incentives for the transfer of appropriate technology by the private sector.
13. Ministers recognise that strengthened scientific, technological and administrative capacities in developing countries are essential for promoting sustainable development. Environment and Development Co-operation Ministers in OECD countries have therefore agreed to promote and further strengthen co-operation with developing countries in the area of capacity building. Technical and information exchanges, twinning arrangements as well as co-operation between government agencies, universities, research and scientific institutions are amongst the mechanisms which should be further strengthened and extended. Ministers also note with interest the development of an IEA/OECD initiative to establish an energy technology information system to promote the use of energy technologies for the control and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Ministers recommend that IEA and OECD discuss their initiative with developing countries at an early stage.
14. In addition, Ministers request the Development Assistance and the Environment Committees to formulate a programme of work to enhance the environmental capacity building efforts of Member countries. Such a programme should include a review of policies and activities of OECD countries in the field of technological co-operation relating to the environment; an inventory of capacity-building programmes; linkages to national and regional centres for sustainable development; and mechanisms for disseminating the special expertise of OECD. This programme is intended to contribute to the effective implementation of the results of UNCED.
15. In general, Ministers will ensure that their respective Ministries and Agencies further intensify their own co-operation, and that with other Ministries, with a view to promoting collaborative action for sustainable development. They welcome in this connection the support being provided through the work programme of the OECD to the UNCED process, believing that this sharing of more than two decades of accumulated experience in promoting economic growth and a sound environment in the 24 Member countries can make important contributions to achieving sustainable development everywhere. In particular, they agree that the OECD and its Member countries should:

- promote the application of the Guidelines and Recommendations on environment and aid adopted by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and endorsed by Ministers;
- make widely available the results of work on management of chemicals and wastes, biotechnology, energy, transport, cleaner technologies, and on the economics of sustainable development;
- intensify work on other issues related to sustainable development, such as the economics of natural resource use and on the relations between trade and environment;
- facilitate the exchange of experience in the appraisal of development policies and programmes and in the design and implementation of environmental management tools, including economic instruments, regulations and environmental indicators.

16. Ministers recognise the need to ensure that nuclear power generation takes place under the highest available standards of safety. Accordingly, they urge the competent international bodies, including the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to provide their services, particularly to OECD non-Member countries of central and eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union and the Republics. Such assistance would be part of the efforts being undertaken by international organisations, the European Community and national governments to address the problems associated with nuclear installations in these countries.
17. Ministers regard the OECD as a major forum for discussing linkages between environmental and other policies, in particular environment and development assistance.

Trade

18. Improvements in the international trade system are also a vital contribution to sustainable development. Given the significance of increased international trade for sustainable development, Ministers stress the importance they attach to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. All countries have a common interest in ensuring that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive. Achieving sustainable development will require complementary actions to address trade and environment conflicts which may arise. There are still considerable divergences in views of how to increase the compatibility of trade and environmental policies at the national, regional and global levels. Ministers support the efforts by the OECD to analyse trade and environment linkages and recommend the drawing up of OECD guiding principles on trade and environment, and welcome the reconvening of the working group on trade and environment of the GATT.

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The Role of the Private Sector

19. Ministers underline the important role of the private sector as provider of managerial, technical and financial resources in support of sustainable development. The private sector is a driving force for economic growth in market-oriented economies, concurrently it creates resources needed to protect the environment. Ministers endorse the work being done by the Business Council for Sustainable Development in promoting co-operative efforts with firms in developing countries. Ministers welcome the inclusion in 1991 of an environmental chapter in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as well as the Business Charter for Sustainable Development adopted by the International Chamber of Commerce. They encourage corporations in OECD countries to subscribe fully to these principles and guidelines for good environmental practice and behaviour.

Non-Governmental Organisations and People's Participation

20. Ministers welcome the increasing involvement of non-governmental organisations both in developed and developing countries in sustainable development at all levels, especially by action at the grassroots level.
21. Sustainable development can only be achieved through the active involvement of all segments in society, including indigenous people and local communities. Ministers therefore underline the need for a greater devolution of decision-making to the local level and the empowerment of all to participate in development within the framework of democratic systems of government. In this connection they also stress the importance of mobilising public support for policies conducive to sustainable development.
22. Particular attention should be given to the different roles assumed by men and women in environmentally-related activities in developing countries. More efforts are required to involve women from the preparation stage in forestry, agriculture and water management programmes because of their essential responsibilities, skills and knowledge in these sectors.

UNCED 92

23. This Ministerial meeting takes place at a crucial moment in the preparations for the UNCED. Ministers have carefully considered the status of the preparatory work and reiterate the strong support of their Governments for the Conference. They pledge their firm determination to make it a success and believe that the attendance of world leaders would make an important contribution to this. The Conference should formulate agreed strategies for sustainable development and start a process of strengthened partnerships to attack environmental problems at national,

regional and global levels. The Conference also offers the occasion for endorsing a consensus on principles and priorities for the 1990s and beyond, and for agreeing to Agenda 21 with commitments for concrete actions and means of implementation. Ministers reiterate their countries' support for the development of effective framework conventions on biological diversity and on climate change to be opened for signature during the 1992 UN Conference as well as for a statement of principles which should form the basis for negotiations on a Forest Convention. In conclusion, they see the Conference as a decisive stage in a new process of multilateral co-operation on environment and development.
